



# THE CLUB CAR



BULLETIN 695

PACIFIC LOCOMOTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

JULY 2021

## Steam Department keeping busy



*Photo by Alan Siegarth*

Skookum freight train run-by at the Arroyo Bridge.

### IN THIS ISSUE

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The Steam Department has been busy over the last month working on the Skookum and Clover Valley #4. The Skookum and the #4's air pumps have been gone through with air valves checked and lapped. The shuttle valve on the Skookum was found to have an issue as well which a little filing and ring work has fixed. In addition, a lot of switching was required to get the shop tracks set up to run the #3 in June – swapping locomotives for operations

turns out to be a very involved process! During our freight car inspections for the #7 for #1744 photo charter in May, Doug Vanderlee found one of the trucks on our water tank car had some issues. The car was immediately pulled from service and with car shop occupied, the steam department did a lot of switching to get the car into the backshop. The concrete floor in the shop would make jacking the car up much safer as both

**Continued on Page 8**

**OUR MISSION:** To be an operating railroad museum for standard gauge railroading, past, present and future, with emphasis on the Western United States and special emphasis on Northern California

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## MEETINGS

Most General Meetings  
take place at  
Sunol Glen School  
in Sunol.

Meetings are held in January,  
March, May, June, July,  
and October, but can be  
subject to cancellation.

### Board of Directors Meeting

**Saturday  
JULY 10  
2:15 PM**

Teleconferencing service

### General Meeting

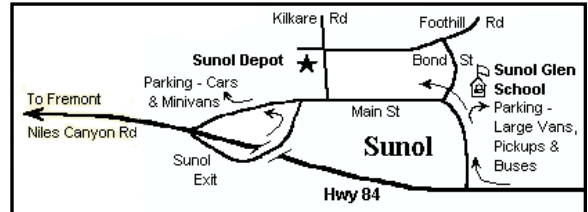
**Saturday  
JULY 10  
3:30 PM**

Teleconferencing service

## BOARDING LOCATIONS

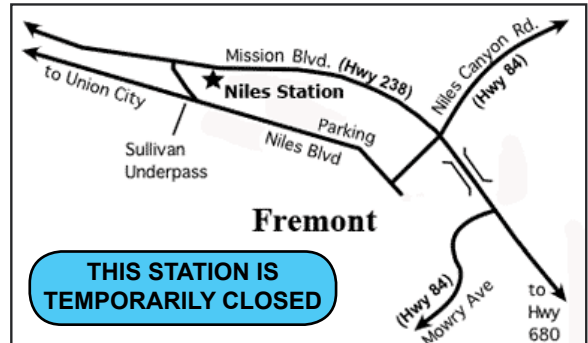
### SUNOL DEPOT

6 Kilcare Road  
Sunol, CA 94586



### NILES STATION

37029 Mission Blvd.  
Fremont, CA 94536



### ===== BOARD OF DIRECTORS =====

President	Henry Baum	(925) 447-7358
Vice President	Mike Strider	(707) 318-2633
Recording Secretary	Jim Evans	(650) 697-9033
Membership Secretary	Rich Alexander	
Treasurer	Pat Stratton	(650) 888-8619
General Manager	Stephen Barkkarie	(510) 368-1733
Director-At-Large	Kent Hedberg	(415) 608-3811
Director-At-Large	Warren Haack	
Director-At-Large	Gail Hedberg	(510) 207-5524

## CLUB CAR DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting articles and photos for next month's issue of The Club Car is the  
**20th OF THIS MONTH!**

Submitting articles is easy by e-mail in **WORD** text format. Digital photos may also be submitted by e-mail. Electronic images should be saved as PC format .jpg files with minimal compression (i.e., average to excellent quality). A **WORD** file with the photo number, description of photo and identifying the people in them **IS REQUIRED**.

Send to the Editor, Barry Lependorf at [clubcar@ncry.org](mailto:clubcar@ncry.org)

The editor reserves the right to hold or edit material as necessary.

The Club Car is an official publication of the Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc., P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515.

The Club Car is distributed monthly to members, sponsors and friends of the Pacific Locomotive Association.

The Pacific Locomotive Association, Inc. is an IRS Code 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. The PLA's Federal Tax ID is 94-6130878, the State of California Tax ID is 0501445.

General Meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of January, May & July at 7:30 p.m. and the 3rd Saturday of March, June & October at 3:30 pm at the Sunol Glen School, two blocks east of the Depot on Main Street in Sunol, CA. Members, Sponsors & Guests are welcome.

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Views expressed herein are those of the author unless specifically noted by the editor as official policy.

The Pacific Locomotive Association is a member of the HeritageRail Alliance (HRA).



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## ===== July Activities =====

July 3	1st Saturday	MoW Building East	8:00 am (Brightside)	- Mike Strider
July 4	1st Sunday	Member Event, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:30 pm		- Doug Debs
July 10	2nd Saturday	Board of Directors Meeting, 2:15 pm	(Teleconference)	
July 10	2nd Saturday	General Meeting, 3:30 pm	(Teleconference)	
July 10	2nd Saturday	Regular Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
July 11	2nd Sunday	Regular Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
July 17	3rd Saturday	Regular Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		
July 18	3rd Sunday	Regular Train Operations, Sunol, 10:30 am, 1:00 pm		

===== ALL ACTIVITIES SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION =====

## Volunteer Report

**Ed Best - Volunteer Coordinator**

The following is a list of the people who reported a total of over 2,847 May volunteer hours. All volunteer hours on projects related to the railroad are eligible to be registered. Please send your hours to me by e-mail at [volunteers@ncry.org](mailto:volunteers@ncry.org). One member of a working group can send me the data for all members of the group. Train Crew hours are collected directly from the log sheets and meeting attendance by teleconference is reported to me by the Membership Secretary, so they do not need to be e-mailed to me.

### ADMINISTRATION

Henry Baum  
Mike Strider  
Jim Evans  
Linda Stanley  
Pat Stratton  
Steve Barkkarie  
Jim Stewart  
Kent Hedberg  
Gail Hedberg  
Chris Hauf  
Dennis Mann  
Don Gholson  
Donna Alexander  
Ed Best  
Jackie Vlasak  
Joe Scardino  
Mark Miller  
Mary Asturias  
Paul Veltman  
Rich Alexander  
Steve Jones  
Zonker Harris

### ARCHIVES & LIBRARY

Brian Hitchcock  
George Childs  
Linda Stanley  
Steve Jones

### CAR DEPARTMENT

Bill Stimmerman  
Bob Moore  
Bonnie Harrington

### CAR DEPARTMENT

Denis Murchison  
Dennis Mann  
Gerald DeWitt  
Howard Wise  
Jack Harrington  
Jim McDaniel  
Kurt Olsen  
Marshall Williams  
Norm Fraga  
Pete Goodier  
Phil Stone  
Ron Thomas  
Steve Van Meter  
Sue Thomas  
Tom Crawford

### COMMISSARY

Doug Debs  
Matt Petach  
Sally Mills  
Sue Thomas

### DEPOT CREW

### & OPERATIONS

Donna Alexander  
Kent Hedberg  
Laurel Hamilton  
Rich Alexander

### DOCENTS

Jim Stewart  
Rob Giles  
Sue Thomas

### ELECTRICAL & SIGNALS

Curt Hoppins  
Jim Stewart

### FACILITIES

Bill Ross  
Bob Bailey  
Bob Bradley  
Doug Debs  
Gerry Feeney  
Jack Harrington  
John Pelmulder  
John Zielinski  
Rich Alexander  
Rich Gove  
Steve Barkkarie  
Steve Coon  
Steve Jones  
Wesley Van Osdol

### GIFT SHOP

Charlene Murrell  
Donna Alexander  
Gail Hedberg  
Patrice McDonald

### MECHANICAL

Alan Siegwarth  
Bill Ross  
Bill Stimmerman  
Chris Hauf  
Chuck Kent  
Dee Murphy  
Dennis Mann

### MECHANICAL

Gerald DeWitt  
Gerry Feeney  
Henry Chandler  
Howard Wise  
Jeff Haslam  
Justin Legg  
Karl Swartz  
Kurt Olsen  
Rich Gove  
Steve Jones

### MEETINGS

Bob Pratt  
Charles Navarra  
Charles Smith  
Chris Campi  
Chuck Gullo  
Dave Burla  
Dee Murphy  
Dexter Day  
Don Gholson  
Donna Alexander  
Doug Vanderlee  
Ed Best  
Gail Hedberg  
George Childs  
Henry Baum  
Jim Baber  
Jim Evans  
Jim Gilmore  
Jim Stewart  
Jorg Linke  
Karen Kadaja

### MEETINGS

Karl Swartz  
Kent Hedberg  
Kurt Olsen  
Leslie Smith  
Linda Stanley  
Mark Miller  
Marshall Williams  
Matt Petach  
Mike Pechner  
Mike Strider  
Pat Buder  
Pat Stratton  
Patrice McDonald  
Paul Veltman  
Peter Midnight  
Randy Johnston  
Rich Alexander  
Rob Giles  
Ron Thomas  
Steve Barkkarie  
Steve Jones  
Steve Slabach  
Tim Flippo  
Tom Eikerenkotter  
Zona Fowler

### MOW & TRACK

Charles Navarra  
Chris Campi  
Dan Mills  
Dee Murphy  
Doug Vanderlee  
Frank Fontes

### MOW & TRACK

Henry Baum  
John Pelmulder  
John Zielinski  
Jorg Linke  
Ken Southwick  
Kevin Zimmerman  
Linda Stanley  
Mark Whitman  
Matt Petach  
Mike Pechner  
Mike Strider  
Mike Strider  
Pat Stratton  
Ron Thomas  
Steve Barkkarie  
Steve Hill  
Steve Jones

### OTHER

Barry Lependorf  
Carlo Borlandelli  
Doug Debs  
Ed Best  
Karl Swartz  
Patrice Warren  
Steve Jones  
Steve Slabach  
Zonker Harris

### SWITCHING CREW

Gerry Feeney  
Kent Hedberg  
Rich Anderson  
Rich Gove

### TRAIN CREW

Alan Siegwarth  
Bonnie Harrington  
Brad Jones  
Charles Franz  
Chuck Kent  
Curt Hoppins  
Derek Lyon-McKeil  
Don Nelson  
Donald Kirker  
Doug Vanderlee  
Ed Best  
George Mednick  
Gerald DeWitt  
Henry Chandler  
Jack Harrington  
Jim Stewart  
John Sutkus  
John Zielinski  
Jon Williamson  
Jordan Hamilton  
Jorg Linke  
Justin Legg  
Kent Hedberg  
Kurt Olsen  
Leanne Hamilton  
Mark Miller  
Rich Anderson  
Ron Thomas  
Scott Chrislip  
Tim Flippo  
Warren Haack

## President's Message

Henry Baum - President

The State of California and, by their tendency to now follow the state restrictions, Alameda County have lifted all the Covid-19 restrictions that were in place regarding social distancing, assembly sizes, and indoor activities. Happy Days are here again. The only restriction still in force that impacts us are the mask restrictions. The State of California and Alameda County both are supporting the TSA restriction requiring masks on 'public' transportation. The TSA regards what we do as 'public' transportation and requires us to follow numerous rules and regulations that are invisible to our members and our passengers. They do allow us (the tourist and excursion operations we like to refer to as 'Heritage Rail Operations' some leeway regarding things like anti-terrorist training but they do keep an eye on our operations.

I was one of the train ambassadors on the first weekend since restrictions were lifted for all our runs and did find that there was excellent compliance from our passengers regarding their legal requirement to wear masks. I only had to remind a few people a few times. Human nature being what it is, you did find that some folks removed their masks when we weren't around and popped them back on when they spotted us coming. Others adopted the 'can't wear a mask because I'm eating or drinking' dodge, lifting something to their mouth when they saw train crew or ambassadors heading their way. We were not fooled, but we played along.

As this was the first weekend, I was pretty happy with how things went. I am expecting the problem to get harder and harder to control as folks get more used to not wearing masks all the time. While I would love to no longer need Train Ambassadors, we may find we need more folks helping us out with this duty until the mask requirement is lifted. If you can help out be sure to visit the volunteering link on the Member's Website to sign up. It is easy duty, and

you get free train rides.

NCRy still must comply with Federal Railroad Administration [Emergency Order No. 32, Notice No. 1] Emergency Order Requiring Face Mask Use in Railroad Operations that went into effect March 1, 2021. Hopefully it will be lifted soon.

Do not forget to go online and sign up for the 4th of July barbecue and train ride. Hopefully you will get this edition of the Club Car in plenty of time to sign up.

The PLA Board is confident we will be able to run Train of Lights this year in a truly normal fashion. We are not going to change anything and will run everything exactly the same as we did in 2019. Of course that means running two trains 4 nights a week. Therefore we will need to ensure we have sufficient volunteers to make this happen. We will need train crews, first class car docents, commissary help, Santas, depot and gift shop staff. We will also need to have the folks who keep the trains running doing their thing as well as the MOW crew. As always, we will begin the Herculean effort of decorating the train beginning around Labor Day. The Car Department is working to get the ADL, the WP315, the Diner and the Dome Car ready for TOL service. The WP713 will be getting some working testing pulling a big train on the 4th of July runs.

I am hoping that the lack of TOL operations last year will translate into a great turnout from our volunteers who have built up a reserve of Holiday Spirit that needs to be released. Indoor and outdoor decorating will get a boost as some of the cars are still decorated from the 2019 season, and that will get us going quicker.

At the June member's meeting the results of the election for PLA Board members were announced. First, I want to extend the PLA's heartfelt thanks to James Stewart and Linda Stanley who stepped down from their positions as

At-Large Director and Membership Secretary respectively. Their efforts throughout their term were greatly appreciated.

Mike Strider was re-elected as Vice-President, and Rich Alexander was elected as Membership Secretary, a position he has held before. Two At-Large director positions were up for election this time. These positions went to the top two vote-getters. Gail Hedberg won the first At-Large position. The second At-Large position ended in a tie between Linda Stanley and Warren Haack. To the best of my knowledge, this has never happened before in a PLA Board election (or any other voting situation). Luckily, the PLA By-laws had a procedure in place that allowed for the breaking of the tie through a ballot process of the newly elected Board to determine a winner. I am sure the process would have worked flawlessly, but Linda Stanley magnanimously withdrew from the election, eliminating the tie, and allowing Warren Haack to assume the second At-Large position. I want to congratulate all the new or re-elected Board members, who will take their positions at the July Board of Director's meeting, which will still be done as a virtual teleconference. We are still trying to find a viable solution to allow us to hold 'hybrid' in-person/teleconference Board and membership meetings. The need for a good wi-fi setup and a broadband internet connection as well as an audio system which will allow those online and those in attendance to hear each other is a necessity to make this a reality.

During the pandemic, many tourist and excursion operations around the country used the down time to improve their ROW infrastructure. NCRy ROW was and still is in excellent condition and we focused on our Eastward expansion. There are a number of infrastructure projects that we are now considering to capitalize on our excellent financial position and the confidence

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## President's Message

**Henry Baum - President**

that we will be able to meet our budget needs for the coming year. More information on these will be forthcoming as the plans solidify.

I am hoping that all of our members and friends will be eager to resume their volunteer activities to their pre-pandemic levels. We have missed

you and are excited to welcome you back. There is plenty to be done!

It is still vitally important that you notify Ed Best at [volunteers@ncry.org](mailto:volunteers@ncry.org) to record your hours worked, what you worked on, and where you were working. The new restrictions make this vitally important again.

As always, if you would like to discuss this opportunity or any topic in further detail, please contact me by phone at 925.447.7358 or by email at [president@ncry.org](mailto:president@ncry.org).

Respectfully submitted  
**Henry Baum**

## Treasurer's Report

**Pat Stratton - Treasurer**

Our income from operations, Gift Shop sales, and donations for the month of May was \$68,298. Total income fiscal YTD (11 months now) is \$525,898. That is a strong outcome, and it was done without any TOL income and while maintaining Alameda County pandemic restrictions as well.

At the end of May we have spent a total of \$525,345 during this fiscal year. That is \$500 less than we earned. That is the proper way to run a non-profit - spend only what you earn. Good job everybody!

A look at the Budget shows we budgeted for income of \$419k for the year, but after only 11 months have actually taken in \$526k, \$107k more, with the month of June still to go. We budgeted for expenditures of \$720k (because we had extra cash available at that time) and have spent far less than that. The restrictions we had in place for volunteer workers the past year had much to do with that; and they got us through the pandemic with no exposure (that I know of) to any of our volunteers.

Warning! If you have a pending reimbursement request for money spent on

PLA projects, be sure to submit them with documentation to me before the next Board meeting, July 10th. Expenditures on or before June 30 need to be booked as this fiscal year's business. I have the option to treat any requests received after that as an In-kind Contribution, and all you will receive is a Thank You! note. Forms for this purpose are in a folder in the Treasurer mailbox at Blake's, Brightside; or email me and I'll send you an electronic request form.

Did you know you can give the PLA a gift of securities? Making a stock gift is simple and offers a number of valuable financial benefits. You can donate appreciated stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, and the total value of the security upon transfer is likely tax-deductible to you. Also, you have no obligation to pay any capital gains taxes on the appreciation.

The PLA currently maintains an account with Wells Fargo Advisors to offer donors an easy way to transfer securities hassle-free. Contact me for further information on this simple way you can further support the PLA, and legally avoid the capital gains tax. Con-

sult with your return preparer to confirm your gift will be deductible.

Donations for the month of May included \$3,353 for the General Fund; \$1,690 for the SP1744 Restoration; \$265 for the Diesel Dept.; \$13,443 for the Ranch Car, GN1242; \$250 for the Car Dept.; \$500 for the Signal Dept.; \$100 for the New Loco Shop; and \$200 in In-kind Contributions. Thanks to all; and I will also send a letter of thanks and acknowledgement soon.

Let me know if you have any questions or comments.

**Pat Stratton**

**TAX DEDUCTIBLE:** The Pacific Locomotive Association is qualified under Internal Revenue Service code section 501 (c) (3) as a tax exempt organization. Thus, donations to the PLA are tax deductible as CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS to the extent allowed by law. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 515, Sunol, CA 94586-0515. The PLA's Federal ID is: 94-6130878, CA ID is: 0501445.



### E-COUPLING INFORMATION

Website: <http://www.ncry.org>

Email: To Join Members Email List, send an Email to: [info@ncry.org](mailto:info@ncry.org)

Twitter: [@toots4ncry](https://twitter.com/toots4ncry)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/NilesCanyonRailway>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/NilesCanyonRailRoad>





# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager

The end of June brings with it the Summer Solstice, and this year temperature above the century mark also provided us with a preview of the dog days of Summer to come. Although temperatures this high make wearing a mask a real pleasure, we are still obligated to continue the practice by Federal mandate until September. So, we make the best of it and our riders are being good sports as well.

Father's Day also falls in June and is one of our most popular days for passengers. Although we were not able to offer the usual perks for dads, like cab rides or free beers, the trains were sold out and the weather decided to cooperate and not deliver sweltering heat. I am never sure whose smile is widest on these runs, the children or the fathers (especially this year under masks). That is a reward for your volunteering efforts you just cannot measure. We at the NCRY are glad we can provide a safe and enjoyable event for Bay Area families.

Through the whole pandemic, we have adapted to conditions, tightened our belts, pulled up our bootstraps and got on with the business of running the best all-volunteer operating railroad in the West. As a result, as the state comes back to normal, we find ourselves in a strong position both equipment-wise and in enthusiasm. We look forward to getting back to our regular schedule and to presenting our most popular events, like the "Train of Lights", and we're excited to move ahead with new plans to use our "Valley Subdivision" to the East of Sunol.

Before the shut-down, we decided to bring our M-200 railbus out of mothballs for the Eastern operation. To that end, we switched out the yard tracks to give the "Skunk" a first out position and we are re-training crews and putting the motor car through a shake-down cruise. Also, a plan for a toilet facility on-board is being worked out. For years, this vehicle has served as a training tool for train crews, as well as a fun, eye-catching ride for the public.

Around Brightside yard several projects continue to advance. After many months, the mainline walkway project is nearly finished. All that remains is to fill in some walking rock and our crews will have a stable, safe pathway the full length of the yard (almost a quarter mile). I personally have been looking forward to this improvement since I was a student brakeman, more years ago than I would like to mention.

Another improvement I promised an update on is the MOW area expansion. After installation of the wall and pads for the new containers, the drainage system needed modification. Precast boxes have been on order for months, but unavailable during the pandemic. In keeping with our leaner spending model, we began looking for alternatives and came up with a novel solution. We used some old steel pipe and some left-over steel grating to form a nesting set of pipes that fit neatly over the existing culvert (with a sec-



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

Father's Day at Sunol Station.



Photo by Stephen Barkkarie

The crane operators view as Gerry Feeney guides the massive Maybach engine over KM 9010 cab.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Along the Right of Way

**Stephen Barkkarie - General Manager**



*Photo by Stephen Barkkarie*

**Doug Vanderlee assembles drain form.**



*Photo by Stephen Barkkarie*

**Doug, Wes and Mark Whitman built shelter support.**

tion cut out) to form a "leave in place" form and with a little concrete we are done. Very slick if I do say so myself. This technique will work great in the other areas that need drainage also, like the Lube Shed area and White House loading dock (the loading dock is a future project in its infancy).

Speaking of the Lube Shed, we are looking forward to receiving a new (slightly used) fire-rated, double floored, prefab container to replace the tired old one we have now. It will require some more clean up in the area, and the drain I mentioned, but is sorely needed. A big shout out to our Hazmat leader Doug Debs for hunting up this opportunity and his financial contribution to its purchase.

Two months ago, our Board of Directors approved the installation of a temporary structure to protect Wes Swift's beautiful YV330 Observation Car (the sun has been brutal on the car that has been painted twice since its arrival). To make this happen, the end of Yard 3 track has been cleared and support ties inserted under the track. A contractor will install the shelter by the time most folks read this. Wes is incredibly happy to get some protection for his car and hopefully this may be an answer for protecting some of our restorations as well.

Our faithful readers know that we have laid rail on the Happy Valley bridge, and that this is a major milestone on the way into Pleasanton, as well as an accomplishment to be celebrated at our 60th anniversary picnic. Can you imagine we have made it from Castro Point to Happy Valley in only sixty years? Seems like only yesterday we were moving into Brightside and building toward Sunol. Now we have our sights on Castlewood golf course, the 680-highway undercrossing and the long tangent to the lumberyard. Don't think the PLA is only working East, many plans are in the mix for the Niles boarding area as well. Upgrades to the wye track are coming, storage tracks may be in the mix and a real look at bringing in water and septic are under way. Lighting upgrade in the Eastern parking lot will be needed when we return to running the TOL.

Believe it or not, all of this is just brushing the surface of what is going on at the Niles Canyon Railway. I have not gotten into the restorations going on in the Car Dept or the Steam Department, or mentioned the marketing work, website improvements, or repair and maintenance of the Diesel equipment, or the retraining of crews for train and track, or the annual inspection of railcars, the upkeep of the track and yard equipment, or .... Well, you get the idea.

Bottom line is there is a lot to do to run a railroad even if it is non-profit and remember that a labor of love is no labor at all. So come on out and get all the free love you can handle. Until next time,

**Stephen Barkkarie**



## Stack Talk

Alan Siegwarth

### Continued from Page 1

trucks needed to be inspected. The trucks were rolled out, one bolster shimmed and new nylatron center bowl shims were fabricated and installed.

The next part of the project is installing new custom cut oak blocking to replace the rotted blocking supporting both ends of the tank. The tanks on 1930-40's era tank cars were riveted directly to the frame in the middle and the ends are blocked up with specially cut oak blocking and bound to the frame with bands that are tightened with turnbuckles. As PLA does not have the proper carpentry equipment to shape the oak blocks, we will be making do with the table saw and finishing up with a Sawzall – not a quick or easy proposition. However, the tankcar is extremely important for steam operations so we are looking forward to completing the work and getting it back in service.

Alan Siegwarth



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Chuck Kent gathering his newly purchased tools in preparation for running gear work on the Skookum.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

The steam department has been doing a lot of work on our water tank car. With car shop occupied, the steam department did a lot of switching to get car into the backshop to make jacking the car up safer on the concrete floor.



Photo by Alan Siegwarth

Skookum runs under the Union Pacific bridge at Verona Road.



## Historic East Track Build Progress

Volunteers reached an important and historic milestone Saturday, June 5, 2021, when the last track panel was laid up to the Happy Valley Road Bridge and rails were set on the bridge. A crew of 13, including Wes Swift, Steve Jones, John Zielinski, Pat Stratton, Doug Vanderlee, Matt Petach, Steve Barkkarie, Frank Fontes, Dave Fontes, Mark Whitman, Chris Campi, Jorg Linke, and myself, helped the effort to lay the last four track panels, as well as repair the bridge deck. While track panels were being laid up to the bridge using the Burro crane being operated by Dave Fontes, other volunteers were taking care of the finishing touches to the repair of the bridge deck. To prevent vehicles below the bridge from having materials and debris fall on them from the bridge deck reconstruction, flagging was performed on the roadway below with the help of Steve Jones and Pat Stratton using radios with Chris Campi giving commands up on the bridge. The remaining guard timbers, walkway planks and straps were installed on the East (railroad South) side of the bridge. We now officially have skeletonized track built onto the Happy Valley Road bridge located at mile post 39.06. The next priority task is to harden up the recently installed track panels which includes the gauging and spacing of cross ties, and the securing of the ties with spikes. This is all in addition to the ballasting, surfacing, lining and dressing of the track for final alignment before revenue trains can operate to the bridge.

The next push after Happy Valley Road bridge will be building track further East, over the Pleasanton-Sunol Road bridge (MP 39.20), past the slide near MP 39.32, then under the I-680 freeway (MP 39.58) where that location under the freeway is the highest point on the Niles Canyon Railway, 350 feet above sea level.

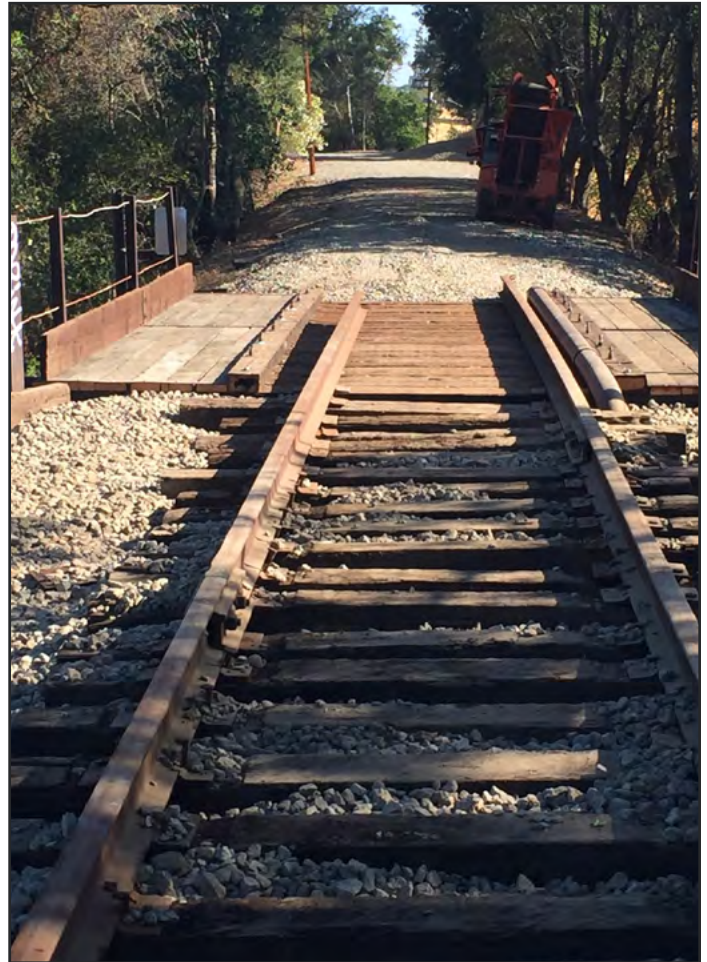
Our next Saturday workday is July 3rd. Come out and enjoy the fun!

**Mike Strider**



*Photo by Matt Petach*

Two blue jays eating part of Mark Whitman's food during lunch.



*Photo by Doug Vanderlee*

Skeletonized track on Happy Valley Road bridge.



*Photo by Mike Strider*

Burro crane posing on new track at Happy Valley Road bridge.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager

This month's tale:

### EQUIPMENT AFAR COMES TO NCRY FOR VISIT

It is now early Fall of 2004. The crossing at Hearst was just completed in July of 2004. The crossing has not seen much action since built. That would soon change. We are now beginning to look forward to this season's Train of Lights. But one thing is becoming very apparent. We do not have enough equipment to meet the demand for that train. At that time, we had one caboose, two coaches, one ADL, one combine, the Bones, Herder and a generator car. The Park car was under construction. But for now, we are a little thin on equipment for the interest we have for this year's TOL. We need more equipment, but where to get it. This is where this month's tale begins. It is now early October. The decorating of the TOI has just got started. New decorations for this year are being coordinated on how to mount them on the cars for best display purpose. But the big problem that still faces us is that we don't have enough seats for the demand. In 2004, we did not have the volume of cars as we do today to choose from. I worked for Caltrain at that time. Every morning going into SFO Station, we pass these converted into coaches RDC bud cars parked under the free-way doing nothing but being protected by security. I went down there and looked the cars over to see what condition they are still in since Caltrain has not used them for four months and they are now up for sale. I decided we can't lose anything for asking for a few of them on loan for our TOL and have them returned in early Jan 2005. I got a hold of Art Lloyd who is on the JPB BOD. I told him our problem and wondered if he could help getting us a few RDC cars on loan for our use on the TOL this year. He said write a letter to Caltrain and ask if the PLA could have the use of three RDC cars for our Christmas train and main fund raiser for PLA which is a nonprofit organization. We would need the cars as soon as possible. The cars would be returned in early January in the same condition as we received them. It seems that the cars have been sold to the Grand Canyon Railway. Art Lloyd got the letter and ran it through channels. I got a call from Art's office and was told to go down to the storage area where the RDC's are stored and pick out three cars that we could use. Mechanical SFO Caltrain would like me to pick three cars that were coupled together so little switching would be needed. I had these cars when they were in service. Some were better than others. I picked out three cars. One had a full big toilet area for ADA. Each car had air condition and heat. What I didn't expect, the JPB had CALTRAIN SFO Mechanical do a complete service on these cars and got all specs up to date for shipment. When mechanical got done with the cars, the cars were taken out



Photo by: Alan Siegarth

The No. 2 sits along side the UP engines while the two crews exchanged pleasantries.



Photo by: Doug Vanderlee

Student Brakeman Richard Carpentier collects honors for being on point of first passenger car to cross Hearst crossing.



Photo by Doug Vanderlee

Visitor from Afar enters the NCRY. First car to make use of new crossing and visit NCRY for TOL.



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

**Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager**



*Photo by Pat Warren*

**Converted Herder into 480v Generator car. Stan Bringer, Jim Wood and Don Pomplun refuel car.**



*Photo by Pat Warren*

**Curt Hoppins, Jim Evans and Jim Wood get one of the RDC's ready for TOL.**

to Santa Clara yard for pick up by UP for their trip to Hearst siding and the NCRY as a donation for the TOL use. We paid for mechanical work done on the cars. It is now early October and we have John Fenstermacher annual Charter for attendees at a Bay Area Managers conference. These are high level managers from all over the area who take a break from their important decision making to come out and ride our train and see some classic historic right of way up close and personal. Meanwhile back at Hearst, the Union Pacific has arrived with the three converted Caltrain RDC's. The cars were set out on the spur track that we share with the UP. The two UP engines went back to the siding and coupled up to their train. They took a break waiting for the arrival of the No. 2. They wanted to see the No. 2 steam engine do some switching. Back in Sunol, the charter has arrived from its run up through the canyon. I got a hold of the crew by phone and notified them that the RDC's are here at Hearst. The No.2 already coupled to the Bones was cut off from the train and headed out to Hearst with the No.2 and Bones. They dropped the Bones on our main and went into the clear. We held a good job briefing and I took the crew up to do a walk around of the RDC's since they had a few features that our crews know nothing about. The 480 cables were plugged in place. Also, the angle cocks to shut off the air to the brake pipe are located on the side of car in wheel well area by the trucks. The buffer plates have good springs in them and are under pressure when coupled together. The cars also have tight lock couplers. In other words, you have got to compress them to lift the cut lever to uncouple the cars, the same as we do now, but it takes a little getting familiar with. It was a learning experience, but the crew got the situation under control nicely. The UP crew stuck around to watch the switch operation. You don't get to see a 1924 Baldwin 2-6-2 tank steam engine in action switching every day. The No. 2 pulled up alongside the UP engines and the two crews exchanged pleasantries. Now it was time to go to work. Yes Quincy #2 put on a good show and showed the UP crew what switching with steam was like in the past before their time. The UP crew stuck around to watch the first move and then shoved off to complete their run. The first RDC coach was the first car to cross the new Hearst crossing and a test for the bicycle-safe rubber insert that has been installed to prevent the bicycle-safe rubber insert that has been installed to prevent the bicycles from having their tires go into the flange way of the rail. The first RDC coach was coupled to the Bones sitting on the mainline. That first car was followed by the other two and the train was ready to return to Sunol to pick up the train awaiting their return. The Cars were delivered to Brightside and set on the siding. The cars now will be decorated for the Train of Lights. That will be a new challenge since we have no pre-

# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Tales of the Past

**Dexter D. Day - Operations Manager**

plan for decorations for these cars. We were decorating the cars that already had a set-up plan for the car. The reason for the Budd cars on the TOL is due to the need for more covered cars in case of bad weather. The three RDC'S that are on loan have heat and air conditioning that makes it a nice warm atmosphere for those cold nights. They also presented a new problem. The cars run off 480 volts. That means that we had to lease a 480 volt quiet generator to make the systems on the cars work. We took the open car Herder and put a sound barrier across the middle of the car. That way, we still had about 20 feet of open car space for passengers. During the Operation of the Train of Lights, the cars were well received. The onboard lavatory on one of the RDC's really helped out since it was big and designed for large volume use. When the last day of the TOL took place. The PLA offered free TOL trips on a Thursday for Military personnel and military families who had sons and daughters in the military. A comment from one of the family members was. "The free train rides show an awareness for all the people who have sons and daughters serving overseas." With the completion of these trains, the TOL season came to a close. The three RDC cars needed to be completely undecorated and cleaned within two days so we could have them set up at Hearst for pick up by UP. The cars have a shipment date to be returned back to San Francisco JPB yard which the PLA is paying for. All the RDC'S at that time had been sold. Upon their return, they were set up for the move to the Grand Canyon Railway. But while the RDC'S were here, they were a big hit with our passengers on those cold or wet nights on the TOL. It was really nice of the JPB to go along with our request for the use of the RDC cars for our TOL that year. With the loan of the RDC's, the 12-car TOL that year carried a record of 13,000 happy passengers. If it wasn't for the JPB help on loaning the PLA those cars, we would never been able to accomplish what we did that season.

With that said, another tale comes to a close.

**Dexter D. Day**

## Brush Cutting Report

**Steve Jones - Sawdust Manager**

Brush Cutting Day for May 2021 was accomplished on Saturday the 29th. The gang consisted of John Pelmulder, Linda Stanley, Mark Whitman, John Zielinski, Kevin Zimmerman and yours truly. My thanks to these individuals for traveling significant distances and making the effort to support Vegetation Control.

**Steve Jones**



*Photo by Dexter Day*

**2004 TOL heading into Niles with the new converted 480v generator car and 3 RDC's on rear of train.**



*Photo by Anda Chu - Fremont Daily Argus Staff*

**Santa greeting one of our guests on our dedicated Military TOL's.**



# NILES CANYON RAILWAY

## Membership Report

Linda Stanley - Membership Secretary

At the height of membership engagement just prior to the Covid 19 Pandemic, the PLA had over 1,100 members. Informative and entertaining presentations, complimentary food & drink to enjoy and comradery -among the 45 attendees at the last in-person meeting- combined to make the PLA membership meetings an eagerly awaited social event; a fun time to relax and enjoy one another's company away from scaling hammers and track jacks.

Since the Pandemic, membership has dropped to 950 members. Differing reasons explain this drop but the change from regular Sunday operations -where members bring families and enjoy a complimentary excursion through Niles Canyon- to the currently scheduled 'Specials' - with this benefit of membership excluded - is one reason expressed time and again by those young families who chose not to renew due to the pandemic's disruption to their income, housing status, and children's lives. This complimentary train ride to get their families out of the house and enjoy an affordable outing out together was their reason for joining the PLA, and without that, no incentive to re-join given limited resources.

As a "Community Benefit" non-profit, the PLA is obligated to serve all communities, especially those most impacted by the pandemic - its younger members and low- income riding public who found themselves financially challenged by Covid shutdowns. It was reported at the June BOD meeting that the PLA enjoys an increasingly better financial position. This being so, perhaps either discounted or complimentary train rides as a benefit of membership will again be considered.

The following 23 new or reinstating members' initiated support for the PLA at this time. These members are: Manish & Prashant Gupta, Jeffrey Perkins, Andrei Svensson, Ling Tandian along with Darrin, Kenzo and Mieko

Atkins, Donald & Irene McGovern, Alex Castro, and Melissa, Carter and Sadie Murdoch. With gratitude we also welcome: Bob Gilbert, Bob & Betsy Hansen, The Brian Mann Family of Rodelia, Brayden, Gavin and Andrea Paterno, and Michel Dictor.

The Whistle Award and the Volunteer of the Year awardees have been selected and these two unique individuals who continued to serve the PLA/ NCRY at an extremely high level - even during the height of the pandemic - are most deserving of this recognition. Their names were revealed at the July 4th presentation ceremony. It is hoped you reserved your spot for this return of the PLA to Sunol Depot Gardens for train rides, BBQ, and you visited the archive exhibit to learn of the PLA's past at Castro Point as we celebrated the PLA's 60th Anniversary.

The PLA has reached its 60th Anniversary because its members have always seen the challenges that lay before it and met them head on. De-

spite the decades of challenges, a united group of volunteers -who certainly did not always agree with each other -kept the larger goal of the growth and well-being of the PLA - as the common goal that kept them all moving forward together. It is my genuine wish that the volunteers privileged today to walk in our Pioneers footsteps will heed lessons from this celebrated past and use as a model for the good and continued growth of the PLA.

True leadership inspires to unite, not divide - as I leave the PLA BOD, I wish the organization the positive and necessary change needed to position the PLA to ascend to the next level in the years to come. I encourage members to take responsibility for ensuring the PLA BOD provides an equitable experience for all.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Linda Stanley**  
Membership Secretary 2019-2021

**NILES CANYON RAILWAY  
WILL HOLD A HANDS ON  
BRAKEMAN CLASS  
ON  
JULY 24 & 25 2021  
CLASS ROOM STUDIES WILL BE  
HELD AT THE WHITE HOUSE FROM  
9 am to 4 pm  
HANDS ON WILL FOLLOW NEXT DAY  
TO QUALIFY, STUDENT MUST BE A CURRENT  
MEMBER AND MUST BE ABLE TO PERFORM THE  
DUTIES OF A BRAKEMAN.  
INTERESTED MEMBERS E-MAIL  
[plancrygm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:plancrygm@sbcglobal.net)**

## PLA Excursions - A Brief History

As the PLA celebrates its 60th anniversary, it is informative to revisit its origins. The "Original 6" young men who founded the PLA were not planning to build a railroad museum. They were interested in taking train rides, particularly when they were historic "Last Runs" of a railroad that was going out of business or discontinuing passenger service. In the days before the Internet, one member of the group would learn of a planned train trip and notify the others. Founding member, Henry Luna evolved his interest in train travel into a career when he started Key Holidays, a rail excursion tour company. Henry's widow, Connie, recalls, "I think Henry started his rail excursion career with the formation of the PLA, as one of its goals was to experience steam operations while they still existed."

Connie continues, "The first excursion I was involved with was the Truckee Limited (Apr. 26, 1970). Henry put it together and I still have the dinner and drink menus for which I did the artwork. The PLA logo is stamped on the back. Details of the trip are in the April, 1970 edition of Pacific News (precursor of the Club Car) written by Editor Karl Koenig. Henry ran the Truckee Limited the next year (April 25, 1971) detailed in an article in Trainorders.com - "The Truckee Limited Returns!!" Henry ran so many excursions for the PLA including every President's Day weekend at the McCloud River Railroad and several at Railtown 1897 as well as worldwide."

Connie Luna and long-time member, Michael Snyder, compiled the following partial list of PLA rail excursions undertaken in the past 60 years. Rail excursions would take many forms, all the way from a chartered car, or a private car on a scheduled train, to a chartered train on a unique route. Some trips were run by other organizers where PLA might just reserve a car, or a special train might be run as a partnership between PLA and another group.

► The earliest information is about two trips in September, 1962, on the California Western, AKA "Skunk Line" in its self-propelled motorcoach. This was a cousin to PLA's M200. The 1960s also had trips to the McCloud River Railroad, the Yreka Western, an SP special train with a KM locomotive to Emigrant Gap and back, and a visit to the Klamath and Hoppow Valley RR, near Eureka.

► In Bulletin #688, the December, 2020 edition of the Club Car, Jim Evans article "When the PLA ran Mainline Excursions", described a special train trip on April 30, 1967, powered by SP KM locomotive 9120. After leaving Sacramento, Stockton, and Tracy, the train ran down the SP track in Niles Canyon, across Fremont to Newark, and up the Mulford Line to Oakland's 16th St. Station where it began."

► The 1970s saw a blizzard of activity with the National Railroad Historical Society visiting Castro Point for a half day on Sep. 2, 1974. The NRHS had another half-day visit to Niles Canyon in 1992. In 1976, there was a private car trip on La Condesa to Reno and return on the Zephyr. During this decade PLA also went to the Yreka Western, the Sierra RR several times, several visits to the McCloud River RR, rode the pre-Amtrak Redwood Budd car from Willits to Eureka and return, saw and rode behind the English loco, the "Flying Scotsman" along the San Francisco Embarcadero, and had several special SP trains.

► The World's Fair of 1986 had a ten-day event in May named "Steam Expo" which had visiting steam locomotives from several places on display. PLA sent two: The three-truck Shay, Pickering Lumber Company # 12, and the Quincy Railroad Company #2. These were taken from Castro Point on flat cars to Vancouver B.C. and brought back to Alameda County's Corporation yard in Fremont.

► In 1987 PLA ran what appears

to be its first excursion outside of the U.S. This was a rail trip from Vancouver B.C. to Williams Lake B.C. and back to Vancouver. Passengers flew between Vancouver and the Bay Area. During this decade there were some private car trips on scheduled Amtrak trains.

► In 1990, Key Holidays was able to become the operator of the "Reno Fun Train". The Fun Train was run over the Southern Pacific from Oakland to Reno and back during February and March each year. Trains departed Oakland late on Friday afternoons with late evening arrivals in Reno. Return trips left Reno Sunday morning with a late afternoon arrival in Oakland. After a few years Key Holidays added a midweek version named the "Snow Train". This train left Oakland on Tuesday mornings for all-daylight viewing over the Sierra. Returns were Thursday mornings.

► The 1990s had activities not to be forgotten. 1992 had an eleven-day tour through Colorado with private cars on the Zephyr, a ride on the Georgetown Loop train, a ride up the Pike's Peak cog railroad, the Cumbres and Toltec and a Photographer's Special on the Durango and Silverton, with rail back to California.

► 1993 had us flying to Vancouver then on the Canadian (with the best railroad shower ever) to Winnipeg. We then went on the steam-heated VIA tram to Churchill, Manitoba, on Hudson Bay for a day of Polar Bear sightseeing, then back to Winnipeg then flying home.

► Things were simpler in 1994 when we rode the Yolo Shoreline from Sacramento to Woodland and back on the former Sacramento Northern Woodland Branch. A few months later, PLA had a special train up the Feather River Canyon turning North at Keddie to Westwood, and back.

► In November 1994 we had a two-week trip to Ecuador where we rode up the Devil's Nose, and flew on to Chile for several train rides. On arrival



## PLA Excursions - A Brief History

at Puerto Montt, Chile, we walked into the depot where a sign said "This is the Southernmost railroad station in the world."

► On Aug. 24, 1996, PLA ran a recreated "Suntan Special" train to Santa Cruz with the intention of having Howard Wise' former SP5623 in the lead, but that was disapproved.

► In October, 1996, PLA got some rare mileage with the first passenger train on the Northwestern Pacific from Healdsburg to Willits and return since 1958 when the Redwood was discontinued.

► The next year, 1997, PLA got a special train from Denver to run over Tennessee Pass and through the Royal Gorge. Next "The Social Event of the Year" was a ride on a San Joaquin to Antioch for dinner at the Riverview Lodge, and train back to Oakland.

► To cap this off PLA ran a nine-day trip in April 1999 to Hay River, North West Territories, Canada, on the Great Slave Lake. This is advertised as the Northern most standard gauge railroad in Canada. "But wait, there's more!" The next event was a six-day chartered VIA train from Toronto going East as far as Sydney, Nova Scotia, and back to Montreal where the trip ended.

► Possibly one of the rarest rail fan trips was a one-week tour of Hawaiian rail locations. This trip was a cruise on the SS Independence, a classic ocean liner built in 1951. Our trip was in September of 2001. We stopped at the four biggest islands and saw what we could. There were two steam locomotives in storage on Kauai, a narrow-gauge steam museum at Ewa, on Oahu, and we traced the 45-mile route of a one-time standard gauge railroad which ran from Hilo North along the East coast of Hawaii. Sadly, the Independence made only two more cruises then spent several years in storage until being scrapped. See her article in Wikipedia.

► The twenty-first century saw some

extreme trips, starting with a nine-day trip to Cuba in 2003 to visit various sugar cane railroads using steam. A ride on the Hershey Electric was the highlight of this trip. This was followed in 2005 by two tours with steam in China. A small but rare tour in 2005 had us touring the Richmond Pacific RR, the former Parr Terminal. Circa 2006, Henry Luna organized his last international tour. It was led by a licensed English Tour Guide. The tour encompassed 19 days in England, Scotland and Wales and included visits to the London Transport Museum, the Swindon Steam Railway

Museum (where the Flying Scotsman was being overhauled), a hydroelectric power plant, numerous narrow and standard gauge "preserved" railroads, preserved wooden hull ships, The Tower of London, and nearly a castle a day. In June 2007, a trip was run on the White Pass and Yukon RR from Skagway, Alaska, to the Yukon Territory in Canada and back.

**Thanks to Connie Luna and Michael Snyder for providing this history. Edited & condensed by Steve Jones.**

## Happy 75th Birthday!, Rich



June 13th was Rich's birthday, and it happened to also be a train operation day. What fun I thought if our passengers wished him a happy birthday when they came for their tickets to ride. So when I sent out the reminder notices the week before I added that Rich Alexander was going to be working the ticket window on June 13th and it was his 75th birthday. It would be a fun surprise to tell him happy birthday. Well, many people came to the ticket window and wished him happy birthday, some sang to him, and he received a few gifts. He couldn't figure out how people knew it was his birthday until someone said they got an email telling them. It was a fun day for a special birthday!

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Skookum at Milepost 31 from the May 1st Photographers' Special.

*Photo by Thomas Schultz*